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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

11 December 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: US Negotiations on Wheelus Air Base

1. Negotiations between the US and the new Libyan junta concerning US evacuation of Wheelus Air Base in Tripoli will begin on 15 December 1969. The US has agreed in principle to Libya's demand for withdrawal, and the negotiations are concerned with the timing and manner of evacuation. (The UK has had its first negotiating session on evacuation from its bases, at which the Libyans flatly demanded speedy UK withdrawal. The UK delegation is unanimous that it must present a firm and specific withdrawal date at the second meeting on 13 December.) Within the policy components of the US government, there are differing views concerning the time frame for US withdrawal. State favors a medium time-frame, say six to nine months. Elements in the Defense Department favor stretching evacuation out for as long as possible, apparently for several reasons. Among these are a hope that some air training may be resumed, a fear that hostile elements might be invited by the Libyans to run the base, and a belief that precipitate withdrawal from Wheelus would encourage the Libyan junta to take precipitate actions seriously detrimental to US oil interests.

2. We believe, however, that the Libyans will not allow any future training and that US agreement to fairly prompt evacuation, -- including setting a date for completion of

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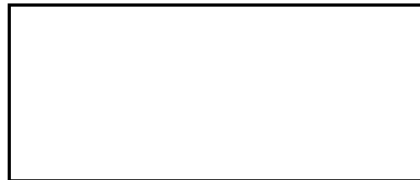
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withdrawal -- would benefit US oil interests in Libya, while trying to drag out either the US tenure or the negotiations would be counter-productive. The evacuation of all foreign troops is the foremost policy goal of the nationalist Libyan junta, a goal which reflects long-held desires of most politically active Libyans. The junta almost certainly hopes to announce to the December 20th Arab Summit meeting that it has secured British and US agreement to evacuate by a given date. Libya's interest in foreign-controlled oil production is primarily financial, rather than political. As long as US-Libyan political relations are tolerable, Libya is less, rather than more, likely to seriously harass US producers, Libya will get \$1.3 billion in oil revenues this year.

3. Appropriate components of OCI and DDP concur in the above judgments.



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- 2 -

S-E-C-R-E-T